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***Judge Finds Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs in Contempt in Native
American Trust Fund Trial
Carson Calls Problems "Inherited"***

Washington, D.C. --

Washington, D.C. – U.S. District Court Judge Royce C. Lamberth today held Neal McCaleb, Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, in contempt of court relating to the Individual Indian Money trust trial before him. Three years ago, Judge Lamberth held former Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and former Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt in contempt in this case.

Congressman Brad Carson (D-OK 2), the only enrolled Native American serving in the House of Representatives, declared his support for Assistant Secretary McCaleb.

"This situation is a very delicate and complex matter that has been litigated since 1996," Congressman Carson said. "For the last 18 months, Assistant Secretary McCaleb has been focused on reforming the trust fund. This fund, unfortunately, has been terribly mismanaged for decades. Assistant Secretary McCaleb inherited this problem from previous administrations, and Judge Lamberth did acknowledge the recent attempts to reform the trust fund."

The Individual Indian Money (IIM) trust was formed in 1887 to manage royalties from oil, mineral, and access rights to 11 million acres of land owned by Native American tribes. The fund now generates approximately \$500 million yearly.

"I have had the honor to know Neal McCaleb for many years, and he is a man of great integrity," Congressman Carson said. "He has worked closely with Native American tribes in my Congressional district in reforming this debunked system. He has shown a willingness and devotion to ensuring the trust fund is reformed, and that it is held accountable.

"It is absolutely critical that the Interior Department reform the IIM. Many steps remain to be taken, however, Neal McCaleb has appropriately acted in consulting with

tribes and seeking their input in working towards reform. In his ruling, Judge Lamberth has disregarded this administration's actions."

Congressman Carson represents Oklahoma's Second Congressional district, one of the most Native American districts in the nation. He serves on the House Resources Committee, which has oversight of the Interior Department and Native American issues, and is a member of the Congressional Native American Caucus.

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